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Sunday Docent Service*The Guidance of Small Groups*

HE who has not wandered through a museum with an enthusiast who, with a few words of sympathetic insight, has invested familiar objects with new beauties, has missed one of the keenest of æsthetic pleasures. The enjoyment of beautiful things is doubled when one has such a companion; the friendly exchange of ideas and emotions quickens perception and stimulates appreciation.

When the individual finds such a guide he is indeed fortunate. But is it possible for a public institution, a museum, to offer this personal, this intimate guidance to the public at large? It would seem to be an ideal impossible of realization.

Through the efforts of Mr. Gilman and Mr. J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., the pioneers in this movement, this Museum has shown that such an ideal can be realized. The "friendly guidance" on week days by members of the Staff and the informal talks on Sundays have shown what a museum can do in the way of fostering appreciation of the fine arts. The Sunday Docent Service has had one drawback: the subject of the talk is announced, and the Sunday visitor who wished to become familiar with a particular object or branch of the collections had, in the past, to accept what was

offered, with little or no opportunity for help in the special matter in which he was interested.

That the Sunday visitor may now obtain such sympathetic assistance is due to the wisdom and energy of Mrs. Charles E. Whitmore, who, in February, 1916, agreed to coöperate with the Museum, meeting visitors informally on Sunday afternoons and going with them about the galleries; offering to the individual that companionship in study and enjoyment which would seem to be the final word in the service which a museum can render. Since the inception of this work last year both Mrs. Scales and Mrs. Norton have assisted in it.

The arrangements are these: At stated hours on Sunday afternoons the Docent meets the visitors at the Huntington Avenue entrance. The group is limited to six persons and the objects to be studied are determined by the wish of the majority. Two or three such groups are met each afternoon. This service is, of course, free.

Mrs. Whitmore's report of the results of the first four months of this informal guidance leaves no doubts as to the desire on the part of our visitors for such service, and those who have followed the development of this new phase of docent work feel that the Museum has added another and very inspiring activity to the many by which it strives to serve the public.

H. E.

Accessions, December, 1916, and January, 1917

*Portrait of Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, D.D.
J. P. Hardy*

Paintings. John Singleton Copley: Watson and the Shark (study) Gift of Mrs. Winthrop Sargent.

Jeremiah Pearson Hardy: Portrait of Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, D.D. Gift of Miss A. E. Hardy.

Roger E. Fry: Landscape (water color) Gift of Denman W. Ross.

Dutch School: Portrait of a Man Gift of Miss Rose Lamb.

John Singleton Copley: Portrait of Mr. Rogers of Salem (?) Bequest of Morrill Wyman.

Prints. Luigi Rossini: forty-four engravings representing Views of Rome; Bartolomeo Pinelli: one hundred etchings illustrating Roman history Gift of Miss Ellen Bullard.

Howard Pyle: two drawings Gift of Mrs. Nathaniel Thayer to the Museum School.

American Numismatic Society: three bookplates (two engraved, one photo-mechanical) Gift of the American Numismatic Society.

R. Ruzicka: House of Benjamin Coe (chiaroscuro) Gift of Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Jenkinson.

R. Ruzicka: View of First Church, Lancaster, Mass. (chiaroscuro) Gift of D. B. Updike.